

# THE SUN

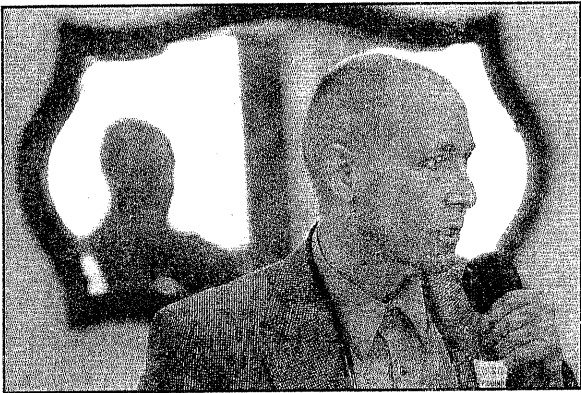
*San Bernardino County's Newspaper*

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2006

WWW.SBSUN.COM

## Downtown turnaround seen

### Expert predicts gentrified SB core



Mediha Fejzagic DiMartino/Staff photographer

Robert Brueggmann, a historian of architecture landscape who was the keynote speaker at the Empire symposium at Cal Poly Pomona, discusses the phenomenon of urban sprawl Wednesday.

**By George Watson**  
Staff Writer

POMONA — Much of San Bernardino will likely become gentrified in the coming years because the region's economic-growth potential is strong enough to withstand a dulled economy, a demographic expert said Wednesday.

At the Empire symposium at Cal Poly Pomona, Michael Reibel, an associate professor of geography, said gentrification — the renovation of old, sometimes dilapidated homes to meet middle-class standards — won't transform the 200,000-person city into the next Pasadena.

But a redevelopment push should turn around the downtown, bring luxury condominiums to the area and improve poverty-stricken neighborhoods, Reibel said.

"It's not going to happen overnight but I think it will happen over the next 10 years," Reibel said.

Reibel's prediction was part of a day-long event attended by about 150 people — mostly businessmen and women. The symposium was sponsored by Cal Poly Pomona, The Sun and its Ontario-based sister newspaper, the Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, Arrowhead Credit Union and

See **EMPIRE** / Page A4

# Empire

continued from page A1

Majestic Realty.

Presenters gave a rosy outlook for the Inland Empire's economic future, particularly in San Bernardino County.

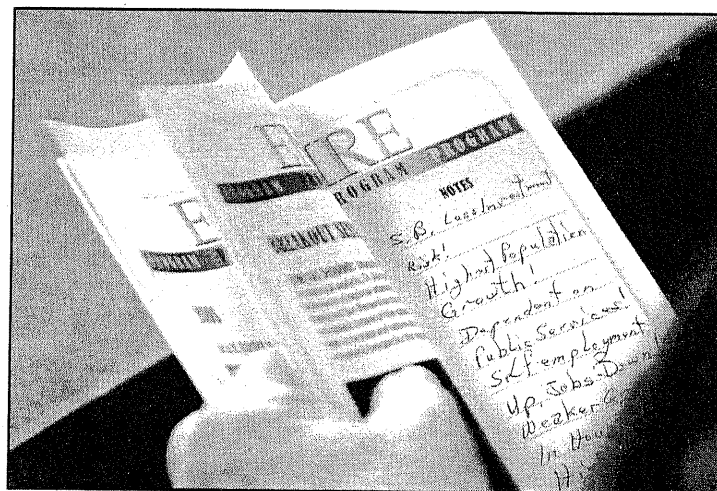
In the future, business owners in Los Angeles County would begin considering moving their operations to San Bernardino County because of the potential for better profit margins, said Greg Hunter, an assistant professor of economics at Cal Poly Pomona.

"Businesses in San Bernardino County may have a competitive advantage over L.A. County," Hunter said.

Los Angeles County employers pay about 1 percent more per year for an employee's work experience, Hunter said. They also pay about 6 percent more if the employee has a bachelor's degree.

A 2005 poll of 500 residents each in San Bernardino and Los Angeles counties conducted for the symposium found that San Bernardino County employees have slightly less work experience than those in Los Angeles County, and they average about two years less of college experience, Hunter said.

"There appears to be a significant labor-market difference between L.A. and San Bernardi-



Mediha Fejzagic DiMartino/Staff photographer

The Empire symposium was held Wednesday at Cal Poly Pomona. The day-long event brought about 150 attendees, mostly businesswomen and men. Presenters gave a rosy outlook for the region's economic future, particularly in San Bernardino County.

no (counties)," he said.

The poll also showed employees in San Bernardino County have a slightly better quality of life.

But when coupled with an economic factor that essentially examines a resident's "bang for his buck," as Hunter said, San Bernardino County residents have an even higher quality of life.

"That explains the trend of why people are moving out here," Hunter said.

And they will likely continue doing so, said Mohammad Safarzadeh, a professor of eco-

nomics at Cal Poly Pomona, because the housing market will remain strong.

He admitted that he has not done market predictions for a long time. But he said he uses a dynamic model that allows for a more complete analysis than others such as UCLA, which he said has predicted a downturn in the housing market.

Local job growth is five times the national average, Safarzadeh said. Population growth is predicted to rise at one of the highest rates in the nation. Building permits continue to rise, when in Los Angeles

County they are stagnant, he said.

Using Safarzadeh's models, he predicts the median house price in San Bernardino County will rise from \$370,000 this year to \$478,000 by 2007. California sales will also rise, albeit at a slower rate, he said. And Los Angeles County's median house price should grow from \$490,000 to \$575,000, he said.

Safarzadeh added that if mortgage rates rise above 7.8 percent, the housing cycle is headed for a negative trend.

In his keynote address, Robert Bruegmann, a historian of architecture landscape, tackled the issue of sprawl and the negative connotations that have been linked to the term for decades.

Bruegmann analyzed areas in Europe and the former Soviet Union that have fought off sprawl, while comparing them with areas in the United States.

Successful anti-sprawl cities have skyrocketing home prices, poor layouts and are laden with traffic, he said.

In comparison, Bruegmann said, regions dominated by sprawl, such as the Inland Empire, have enjoyed success because of it. Residents have had upward mobility over a lengthy amount of time due to it, he said.

Contact writer George Watson at (909) 386-3884 or via e-mail at [george.watson@sbsun.com](mailto:george.watson@sbsun.com).